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# HOLYOKE the Sun

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## Fireworks event postponed

**SPRINGFIELD** — After careful consideration, the Spirit of Springfield, with the City of Springfield, has determined it is in the best interest of the community to postpone Star Spangled Springfield due to COVID-19. The event, sponsored by MassMutual, is being delayed from Saturday, July 4, to a date that has yet to be determined.

“Someone said to me, ‘We need fireworks,’ said Judy Matt, Spirit of Springfield President. “I agree 100%, but we must first think of the welfare and wellbeing of our community. When the time is right, we will be ready.”

“It is the prudent and right decision,” said Springfield Mayor Domenic J. Sarno. “Once we defeat this COVID-19

**FIREWORKS, 2**

## Share your stories of staying at home

The Holyoke Sun wants to know how you’re coping with the coronavirus closures and how they’ve changed all of our lives — no school, no work, social distancing and staying at home.

We can’t meet our neighbors in the schoolyards, playing fields or workplaces of Holyoke, but we can all share a few snapshots of what life’s like with the kids in the house and the home office working overtime. Take a minute to send in an update on how you’re doing, what fun enrichment activities the kids have been up to,

**STORIES, 3**

## NECBL cancels 2020 season

*The Valley Blue Sox play their home games in Holyoke*

**NORTH ADAMS** — The New England Collegiate Baseball League (NECBL) has announced that its board of directors, comprised of executives from its 13 member teams and officers, have voted to cancel the 2020 summer collegiate baseball season.

**NECBL, 4**

# Mayor Morse: City has not begun deficit spending due to the pandemic

*Mayor Alex Morse updated the city council on the state of Holyoke this week*

**By Gregory A. Scibelli**  
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With the city in the midst of a major pandemic, complicated by a worsening situation at the Holyoke Soldiers Home, Mayor Alex Morse was on Zoom Tuesday night to open up the Holyoke City Council Meeting with an update on the state of things in the city.

The Board of Health and Emergency Management, and other department heads also joined the meeting to give updates.

“I thought it would be a good opportunity to provide a comprehensive update on the pandemic,” said Morse.

He thanked the team at city hall for their hard work.

“As all of you know, the City of Holyoke needs to come together,” said Morse. “None of the work we have done would be possible if it wasn’t for the cooperation of the businesses and the people.”



Mayor Alex Morse said the city has continued to be responsible in its approach to the pandemic, saying the city has not had to deficit spend as of this week. *File photo*

He commended the people of Holyoke for their cooperation, which most recently has included the requirement of wearing face coverings while out in public and in essential businesses like grocery stores. Holyoke’s Health Department

implemented the order recently, and it is now a statewide order as of May 6.

The mayor also commended the city councilors, many of whom have taken to alternate means, mostly online, to hear from and interact with constituents and answer questions and concerns.

“There are a lot of people who are really scared right now,” said Morse.

Morse recounted to the

*See DEFICIT, page 4*

## Newman selected as finalist for award

**By Shelby Macri**  
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Local author Lesléa Newman has received a few awards for her children’s

book ‘Gittel’s Journey: An Ellis Island Story’, most recently she was announced as a finalist or “must read” of the 20th Anniversary Massachusetts Book Awards



Newman’s Aunt Phyllis, the daughter of the real ‘Gittel’ and Lesléa Newman hold a copy of the book ‘Gittel’s Journey: An Ellis Island Story’ and their family history in written form. *Submitted photo*

in the Picture Books/Early Readers category.

The award winners have not been announced yet, but the finalists have been selected.

“It’s an honor to even be selected and to be considered a must read,” Newman said. “Of course I’d love to win an add a fourth award to this book, but I’m already incredibly proud of how far it’s come.”

In addition to this, ‘Gittel’s Journey: An Ellis Island Story’ has received the Christopher Award, the National Jewish Book Award, and the Sydney Taylor Body of Work Award. The book has also received the Association of Jewish Libraries Sydney Taylor Silver Medal.

The book that’s received so much praise, tells the story of Newman’s family’s immigration and history. The story follows a young girl named Gittel; a character who is based on the mother of Newman’s aunt, and tells the audience how ‘Gittel’

*See NEWMAN, page 3*

## Tourism takes a hit during pandemic

*Business leaders answer questions during Facebook Q&A*

**By Tyler S. Witkop**  
Staff Writer

Across the country, businesses of all sizes are taking a hit as a result of restrictions to help limit the spread of infections caused by the novel coronavirus. Here in Western Massachusetts, among the hardest hit sectors is that of Tourism, Hospitality and Arts and Culture.

To help spread the message and to encourage future business, two local leaders joined state Sen. Eric Lesser (D-Longmeadow) of the first Hampden and Hampshire District, Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, for a Facebook Live Q&A session Friday,

*See TOURISM, page 5*



# Massachusetts one of 30 states to receive crisis counseling funding

WASHINGTON, D.C.— FEMA announced approval of 30 states and the District of Columbia for its Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training program. The program helps fund state-provided crisis counseling services to residents struggling with stress and anxiety as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

FEMA previously funded crisis counseling in six states:

- \$464,000 to Massachusetts
- \$1.6 million to California
- \$371,000 to Michigan

- \$882,000 to New Jersey
- \$1.3 million to New York
- \$2.1 million to Washington

President Donald Trump delegated authority to FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor to approve requests for the program in order to speed assistance to those in need.

FEMA’s Crisis Counseling program helps people and communities to recover from the effects of natural or man-made disasters through short-term interventions that provide emotional support, crisis counseling, and connec-

tion to familial and community support systems.

Due to the COVID-19 nationwide emergency and the need to protect the safety and health of all Americans, crisis counseling services will be delivered by phone, internet and social media.

Help is also available to all residents of the United States through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services’ Disaster Distress Helpline by calling 1-800-985-5990

or text TalkWithUs to 66746. Spanish speakers call 1-800-985-5990 and press “2” or text Hablanos to 66746 from all 50 states.

If calling from Puerto Rico, text Hablanos to 1-787-339-2663. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, use your preferred relay service to call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or TTY 1-800-846-8517. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories.

## Deadline in May for free Internet offer

Holyoke’s School Department, in partnership with the Mayor’s Office, recently negotiated a contract with Comcast to provide six months of Internet access to families of Holyoke public school students who do not currently have at-home connectivity.

Signups are being taken now. Families who are interested should call the schools at 413-561-0862 (English) or 413-314-3560 (Spanish) to get a promotional code on or before May 14. A district representative will provide a code for signup, or will call back if a message is left.

Families of Holyoke public school students are eligible so long as they have not had Comcast service in the past 90 days. A previous restriction that barred families from accessing

this benefit if they had outstanding debt with Comcast, the main sticking point in negotiations that lasted weeks, and was recently waived nationwide.

The service from Comcast, administered through its “Internet Essentials” program, will include 6 months of free access covered by the city, after which families can continue service month-to-month for \$9.95, or cancel the service to avoid billing. Families will also have access to reduced-cost computers at a rate of \$149.99, plus tax, and free digital literacy training. Holyoke schools will continue to offer remote instruction via the Internet until at least the end of the current school year.

For more information or to sign up, visit [bit.ly/thesun432](https://bit.ly/thesun432).

## Applications accepted for business aid

Applications are still being accepted for the Covid-19 Holyoke Business Emergency Operations Grant Program, administered by the city of Holyoke and Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce, using Community Development Block Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Funds should be used by businesses to help them remain open, retain employees, or adapt business operations remotely or online during the public health emergency. Grant funds can be used for equipment and technology, consultant fees, payroll, inventory, and rent and utilities, if attempts to have these costs modified or deferred have been unsuccessful. The funds cannot be used for the business owner’s own salary or pay, personal purchases, paying off debts, or any items purchased before the grant is approved.

Businesses must meet one of the following HUD eligibility requirements:

- Owned by a low- or moderate-income household
- Employ full-time at least one full-time equivalent low- or moderate-income person
- Provide a service (like a restaurant or grocery store) in a primarily residential neighborhood where at least 51 percent of the residents are low- or moderate-income.

All applicants must be for-profit businesses located in Holyoke that were in operation as of Jan. 20, 2020.

Applications are available now, and will be reviewed weekly until all funds are committed. The review committee consists of representatives from the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce, the city of Holyoke, and EforAll Holyoke.

A total of \$90,000 is available for business grants. While there is no specific maximum request amount, resources are extremely limited and the city will seek to maximize the community impact of this fund. More program details and an electronic application that can be completed online are available at [covid19ghcc.wixsite.com/businessresources/funding](https://covid19ghcc.wixsite.com/businessresources/funding).

For more information, contact Chamber Executive Director Andrea Marion at [andrea@holyokechamber.com](mailto:andrea@holyokechamber.com), or Alicia Zoeller at the Holyoke Office of Community Development, [zoellera@holyoke.org](mailto:zoellera@holyoke.org).

The Chamber of Commerce has also compiled a list of other resources for businesses during the coronavirus state of emergency, at [covid19ghcc.wixsite.com/businessresources](https://covid19ghcc.wixsite.com/businessresources).

## Talent show is city’s latest video contest

The second round of the Holyoke at Home video contests will be a talent show, the mayor’s office announced this week.

All residents of Holyoke are encouraged to get creative while staying home and submit a video of up to 90 seconds showcasing a talent. This can include singing, dancing, cooking, playing an instrument, drawing or reciting an original poem.

The purpose of the contest is to engage residents with each other as well as creating an interactive platform to share different activities, tips and skills to have fun at home during the coronavirus state of emergency. As with the first Holyoke at Home video contest last month, three winners will be awarded, chosen by Mayor Alex Morse, City Councilor Jim Leahy, and a “People’s Choice” determined by online voting. All three winners will receive a \$100 gift

card to the Holyoke business of their choice.

Submissions are being taken until 4 p.m. Friday, May 15. Videos can be uploaded to [www.holyokeathome.com](https://www.holyokeathome.com), or posted to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter using the hashtag #HolyokeAtHome. Privacy settings need to be set at public in order for videos to be judged. If posting to Facebook, videos should be directly posted to the Holyoke City Hall page ([facebook.com/CityofHolyoke](https://facebook.com/CityofHolyoke)), with the hashtag included in the description or title of the video.

Voting for the People’s Choice will begin at 5 p.m. on May 15 and conclude at noon Monday, May 18, at [www.holyokeathome.com](https://www.holyokeathome.com). The three winners will be announced on Facebook later that day.

For more information, visit [www.holyokeathome.com](https://www.holyokeathome.com), or email [MayorsOffice@holyoke.org](mailto:MayorsOffice@holyoke.org).

## FIREWORKS, from page 1

Coronavirus, and we will, with the Spirit of Springfield, celebrate once again. Until then and out of an abundance of caution, we must continue to be proactive in starving this virus by following all of the local, state and federal public health guidelines as we begin to plan to return to a sense of normalcy within phases.”

“MassMutual has been a proud sponsor of Springfield’s Independence Day Celebration since 2006. We will continue to support the Spirit of

Springfield and the event when our community is healthy and it is safe for us to gather,” said Dennis Duquette, Head of Community Responsibility, MassMutual, and President, MassMutual Foundation. “Springfield needs a reason to celebrate.”

Star Spangled Springfield has been a celebration of the country’s independence and a July 4th tradition since 1991. It has featured musical entertainment, family-friendly activities, and a world-class pyrotechnics display by Fireworks by Grucci. It has been sponsored by MassMutual since 2006, with additional support provided by area businesses.

## Springfield Technical Community College Theater Workshop goes online for spring plays



The STCC Theater program is still performing plays using social distancing.

Submitted photo

SPRINGFIELD – Audiences for the STCC Theater Workshop’s plays normally keep their eyes on the stage, but this spring they will keep their eyes on the screen.

At a time of social distancing, Springfield Technical Community College Theater Workshop will perform three plays, with students acting out their parts from their homes in front of their computers.

“We had to change things up this spring due to the stay-at-home advisories related to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Phil O’Donoghue, theater professor. “What was originally seven short plays was cut to three plays that can be performed for the screen. I’m very impressed with rehearsals and how this is turning out. I think audiences will enjoy what our students have come up with.”

The Theater Workshop sent lighting equipment and costumes to the homes of student actors to boost the

production quality.

One play chronicles a therapy session. The other two dramatize phone conversations. The three plays have been performed at major 10-minute play festivals. The plays are “Your Mother’s Butt,” by Alan Ball; “Customer Service,” by Philip Hall; and “Miss You,” by David Auburn

The performances will be available for viewing starting May 15 on STCC’s Facebook page and YouTube channel.

O’Donoghue said the production would not have been possible without help from the STCC community, including STCC Digital Media Professor John Wakelin, STCC Dean of Liberal and Professional Studies Richard Greco, and STCC Marketing and Communications Director Keith Paul.

Cast members are Hannah Brusio-Penkala of Ludlow; Cedric Patterson of Springfield; Gracie Pighetti of Wilbraham; Raquel Polite of Springfield; and Giovanni Tolliver of Springfield



# Pandemic poses unique challenges for women, kids

By Elise Linscott  
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Many women and children in Hampden County have been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and physical distancing measures, from figuring out where to get resources like food and diapers to navigating substance abuse and violence at home or finding ways to access reproductive healthcare.

The Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has been holding meetings and conducting polls through social media to find out what those issues are and how commissioners can advocate for and connect those who are struggling to organizations that can help.

“I fear we won’t really know what women and girls deeply needed during this time until after, because women are really busy tending to the basic needs of their families today,” said Dawn DiStefano, commissioner and executive vice president at Square One in Springfield, a private nonprofit that provides early education, care and family support services. “They aren’t going to sound the alarm for themselves while they’re in the midst of this pandemic taking care of their families. I think as a community, it’s up to us to apply that hyper-vigilance to the work and the effort we put into connecting with women during this time.”

Kids and young adults are also feeling the stress of the pandemic, often more than their parents realize. But children are also resilient, according to commissioners, and many want to help, including local Girl Scout troops who’ve been donating cookies and making window signs for seniors, said commissioner Pattie Hallberg, CEO of the Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts.

### Girl Scouts

Kids aren’t immune to the worry and change they see around them, from completing classes and schoolwork online to seeing scary news on the TV while hav-

ing their parents home all the time. But Hallberg said she’s also seen many who want to get involved and contribute in any way they can.

“There’s a heightened sense of concern,” Hallberg said. “But what we’re finding at the Girl Scouts is so many of these girls are trying to figure out, ‘What can I do to help? What can I do as a person?’ They’re making masks, they’re delivering cookies to the fire department or the police department. They’re doing what they can to find some little way to make a difference. That makes them feel so much better.”

In Monson, for instance, Troop 64811 made signs for a nursing home in Hampden to put in their windows to brighten their day.

Hallberg has heard from many girls that they want to go back to school and that they miss the camaraderie of seeing their classmates and teachers. But they’re still finding ways to stay occupied and virtually connected to the outside world.

“There are so many cool things that they can do on the internet,” Hallberg said. “They can go to the opera, they can go to Broadway, they can take a virtual tour of our national parks, they can go to a science museum. In Girl Scouting, they’re earning badges and patches online, and it’s so fun to watch them earning badges and doing things that they might not have ever done before.”

Hallberg has also been encouraging families to get outside for fresh air and fun activities like scavenger hunts.

### Square One

DiStefano said she and others on the commission have been working to build “a strong mental health safety net” in the community, in order to help everyone stay afloat.

“When we come up for a breath of air, those being willing to take a big gulp of air better be willing to dive back down and bring others to the surface,” DiStefano said. “I think a lot of women will be stuck in the weeds underwater. I think that’s where the commission can do its best

work – we can rally around and find our allies in people to go out to check in on others.”

Ensuring a strong mental health safety net also means going back and ensuring people’s basic needs are being met. While commissioners like DiStefano and Hallberg aren’t in the business of being interventionists, they can listen and do legislative advocacy on their behalf and direct folks to organizations that can help.

“It’s Maslow’s hierarchy of needs – if people don’t have food, if people don’t have a safe dwelling to be in or don’t have access to employment and education, you can’t the start to address things like mental and behavioral health,” she said.

DiStefano said she’s most worried about folks struggling with their mental health and who may not be feeling as resilient. Square One’s home visiting program, for instance, works with mothers who are in their first year of recovery from substance abuse, have children under the age of five and are working toward reunification with their children or have already been reunified.

“The isolation when they’re in recovery, the pressure for most of them – they’re single mothers, so they’re home alone with their children,” DiStefano said. “That’s been the most challenging population for our staff at Square One. I worry about those women; I worry about those children. This is not a good situation for them.”

The pandemic has been destabilizing for many, but it’s not all doomsday, she added.

“I think there’s a place to celebrate the resiliency of women,” DiStefano said. “We’re an amazing part of this world and I think our gender lends itself to some outstanding characteristics. But none of us have ever been through this before... and I don’t think any of us are okay, some of us are just less okay than others.”

### Planned Parenthood of Western Massachusetts

Shanique Spalding, a political organizer with the Planned Parenthood

Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts, said that because of travel restrictions, limited court and clinic hours and legislative meetings, women have been having a tougher time accessing reproductive care.

The ROE Act, which is sitting in the State House Joint Judiciary Committee, is a bill that aims to expand abortion access in Massachusetts after 24 weeks only in the case of fatal fetal anomalies. Currently, a mother who receives a diagnosis of a fatal fetal anomaly after 24 weeks has to travel to Colorado or New Mexico to receive care. But because of the pandemic, traveling that far out of state is nearly impossible now.

The bill could be reported out of committee with a positive or negative recommendation in mid-May, Spalding said. But because of cancellations and physical distancing, she hasn’t been able to do the direct advocacy work around the bill.

Another issue facing young women is around the judicial bypass process, which allows minors to appear in court before a judge, who makes a determination on allowing abortion services if the minor is unable to get parental consent. But many courts are now operating on limited hours.

Minors may also have to deal with figuring out how to get to a clinic in the first place if they’re unable to share where they’re going with their families or partners at home or if they’re essential workers.

“During COVID, there are still young people who have to access abortion services, and there are still people getting fatal fetal diagnoses,” Spalding said.

Health centers that provide abortions are also operating on limited hours. In Hampden County, the only two facilities that provide abortions are Planned Parenthood in Springfield and Baystate Medical Center, Spalding said.

“We’re advocating for folks to pay attention to the fact that abortion services are also being impacted and are still essential care for a lot of individuals for a number of reasons,” Spalding said.

## NEWMAN, from page 1

is able to travel from Eastern Europe to America by herself in order to find her cousin. The book is historical fiction, and Newman spent about a year researching the time period it based in, as well as other aspects and ways of life during those times. There are family stories incorporated in the book, stories that Newman has heard all her life.

“I don’t remember the first time I heard her story, but I can remember hearing it all throughout my life,” Newman said. “There are specific pieces of the original story that are incorporated in the book, then there’s the experience of the boat ride where I had to do research and use my imagination.”

One important piece of the story that’s true is that when Gittel travels to America she carries a piece a paper with the name and address of a relative written on it. When she arrives at Ellis Island and shows the paper to an immigration officer, they discover the ink had worn off on her hands and the paper was illegible. Through the kindest and help of strangers and the community, Gittel is able to find her family.

There are other family stories and facts peppered through the book, making it a very personal work to both Newman and her Aunt.

“This is such a personal book for me, and for my aunt, so to see it succeed like this is truly amazing,” Newman said. “For it to get this much recognition is thrilling, not just for me but for my family.”

There’s a picture of the real ‘Gittel’, her daughter, Newman, and her grandma in the back of the book, along with an author’s note explaining the truths with-

in the story. It’s a story about courage, taking risks, and faith and it’s something that can help kids to learn as well as support this who are dealing with immigration issues today.

Newman explains that she was inspired to create this book because of the amount of immigration stories, cases, and situations springing up throughout the country in recent years. She had hopes for this book to be informative and to connect to the reader in a better way about this subject matter, the fact that the book is being highlighted in a positive way is great and thrilling for Newman. While it’s classified as a children’s book, it’s also informative for young adults and adults. Newman has published 75 books for all ages, and frequently writes poetry among books, in fact Newman started her career publishing poems in ‘Seventeen Magazine’.

She’s proud of her books, and while they haven’t all been praised and awarded like ‘Gittel’s Journey: An Ellis Island Story’, she enjoys writing these kinds of books. This book is a beautiful, emotional, and truthful story that encourages kids to be brave, have faith, and do all they can in tough situations. This book has been recognized as an important cultural story and offers a lesson is a fun and easy way. While the ceremonies for the Awards were cancelled, Newman had a celebratory night at home in place of the ceremonies.

“I had a little ceremony at home with my spouse, we had dinner, got dressed up, and I made my speech that I prepared for the awards,” Newman said. “It helped a little bit and it made me feel better, in the end of the day what matters is that a book so close to my heart was honored in such a great way.”

## STORIES, from page 1

or anything else that’s made the past two weeks a special time in your home. Include full names of the writer or photographer, and anyone visible in each photo. We’ll print the best entries in next week’s newspaper, and in subsequent weeks as the state of emergency continues. The best way to contact us is at [thesun@turley.com](mailto:thesun@turley.com).

We would also be glad to publish Holyoke children’s artwork, essays or photos created during the school closure. Include the creator’s full name, age, and school attended.

For all submissions, also include a telephone number and email address. We won’t publish this information, but may use it to verify identities or ask follow-up questions. Stay safe out there — and let us know how you’re doing!

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# Concerned about youth vaping while schools close?

**By Gail Gramarossa**  
*Guest columnist*

During these extraordinary times, when family life is disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak, schools, organizations, and community activities are closed. While parents work to establish new routines at home and help their teens adapt, they may also be thinking about how to help their teens quit vaping or smoking.

Youth are spending more time in the house and may be more stressed than usual. Parents may especially want to encourage quitting because of evidence coming out that vaping, like smoking, harms the ability of the lungs to fight infection.

Are you concerned that your teenagers may be vaping? What are signs to look for? How can you help? Here are suggestions from the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance ([www.qhsua.org](http://www.qhsua.org)) and the Tobacco-Free Community Partnerships in Massachusetts to help you deal with vaping, including resources for learning more.

*Q: What is in e-cigarettes and vapes? I hear that it is just flavored water. What is so bad about them?*

A: E-cigarettes produce an aerosol, commonly called vapor, which users inhale from the device and exhale. This aerosol may have harmful and potentially harmful substances. E-cigarettes use pre-filled pods or e-liquids/e-juices that are added to the device. E-liquids generally consist of propylene glycol, glycerin, water, nicotine, and flavorings.

*Q: What can I do to prevent my child or loved ones from vaping?*

A: Simply talking with your child about these products can help protect them. Let them know that you care about them and that vaping is not safe.

Be patient and ready to listen; there is no “perfect time” to talk. Your goal is to have a conversation, not to deliver a lecture. So avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue. You can start by mentioning something that you heard about vaping. Tell them the facts: e-cigarettes contain nicotine; nicotine is a highly addictive substance. The smoke from vapes is an aerosol, not water vapor. The aerosol can contain harmful substances. The resources below can help you learn more.

*Q: How can I tell if my child or loved one is vaping?*

A: Many types of e-cigarettes are made to resemble everyday items and come in fruity, minty and candy-like flavors. So, you may not recognize a vaping device or an e-liquid scent.

Here are subtle signs your child might be vaping:

- Unexplained sweet scent – If you notice a sweet scent that is unexplainable, it might be a flavored e-juice for a vaping device.
- Unfamiliar products – If you come across unusual looking items such as unusual pens or USB drives or an unfamiliar battery or battery charging device, they could be associated with vaping.

The best way to know is to educate yourself about the products and to talk with your kids.

*Q: How can I encourage youth and young adults to quit vaping?*

A: There are currently two free programs available in Massachusetts to help youth and young adults quit vaping, smoking or using other tobacco products.

1. This is Quitting powered by truth is a texting program for young people who want to quit vaping. It is a free, confidential 30-day program during which youth receive texts with information,

tips and support. They receive daily text messages to help them prepare to quit and supportive texts from young people who have been through the program. To enroll in the program, youth text “VapeFreeMass” to 88709. Go to [mass.gov/quitvaping](http://mass.gov/quitvaping) to learn more.

2. My Life, My Quit™ is a specially designed program to help young people quit vaping or other tobacco products. My Life, My Quit™ provides five free and confidential coaching sessions by phone, live texting, or chat with specially-trained youth coach specialists. Youth can text “Start My Quit” to 855-891-9989 or call toll-free 1-855-891-9989 for real-time coaching. They can also visit [mylifemyquit.com](http://mylifemyquit.com) learn more.

*Q: How can I help adults who are trying to quit vaping, smoking or using other tobacco products?*

A: Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to connect with the Massachusetts Smokers’ Helpline. The Helpline is a free and confidential service for Massachusetts residents who want help to end their nicotine and tobacco use. If you are looking to quit tobacco, you can now get help from a quit coach over the phone; or use online tools and resources; or a combination of these online features and telephone coaching. You can also enroll online using a computer or smartphone at [KeepTryingMA.org](http://KeepTryingMA.org).

*Q: How can I learn more information and stay up-to-date?*

- A:
- Facts about vaping, tips for parents, and information for schools from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health: <https://www.getoutraged.org>
  - Basic facts for youth and a list of quitting resources for youth: <https://www.mass.gov/vaping>
  - To contact the Tobacco-Free

Community Partnership in your region of Massachusetts:

<http://makesmokinghistory.org/my-community/community-partnerships/>  
To learn more visit:

- [GetOutraged.org](http://GetOutraged.org)
- Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance <https://qhsua.org/teen-prevention/>

• Or contact Melinda Calianos, Program Coordinator, Hampshire Franklin Tobacco-Free Community Partnership; [mcalianos@collaborative.org](mailto:mcalianos@collaborative.org)

Gail Gramarossa, MPH, CHES, wrote this article with resources from the Hampshire Franklin Tobacco-Free Community Partnership and can be reached at [ggramarossa@townofware.com](mailto:ggramarossa@townofware.com). For more information about local efforts to prevent and reduce substance use, contact the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance. Join them by going to their Facebook page, website at [www.qhsua.org](http://www.qhsua.org) or send email to [info@qhsua.org](mailto:info@qhsua.org).

Editor’s note: Gail Gramarossa is a member of the Belchertown selectboard.

If you or a loved one needs help for substance abuse, call the statewide information line at 1-800-327-5050 (TTY: 1-800-439-2370); the phoneline is open Monday-Friday 8am-10pm and on weekends from 9am-5pm. You can also visit the website: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/stop-addiction/>.



## Notaries can act online during pandemic

Gov. Charlie Baker on April 27 signed legislation that authorizes notaries public to perform notary actions using videoconferencing during the Covid-19 public health emergency.

The legislation applies requirements for authorized notaries to use electronic video conferencing for documents requiring notarization, including those related to a mortgage or other conveyance of title to real estate, will, nomination of guardian or conservator, caregiv-

er authorization affidavit, trust, durable power of attorney or health care proxy.

The legislation, which will remain in place until three business days after the March 10 state of emergency declaration is lifted, requires that the notary public and each principal be physically located within Massachusetts and communicating by live video. It mandates that notaries to record and retain a copy of the videoconference and related documentation for a period of 10 years.

### **DEFICIT**, from page 1

council that the city was prudent in its response to COVID-19. He said the emergency response advisory team convened back in February to begin preparing for a potential outbreak. The team worked with stakeholders throughout the city, including emergency and school personnel.

“I think the early response has made a difference here,” said Morse.

Prevention, mitigation, and recovery are the three main pillars the city is focused on, Morse told the council.

In terms of prevention and mitigation, he said the contact tracing work has been successful and excellent work communicating with emergency personnel, area hospitals, and first responders.

Other mitigation work has included distributing Chromebooks to students needing access to complete coursework from home and providing meals to those in need.

“More than 100 families have partnered with Comcast to be able to get six months of Internet access in order to complete schoolwork,” said Morse.

Recovery is not a traditional recovery, Morse said.

“There is still going to be prevention

and mitigation going on until we have a vaccine,” said Morse.

He did say a lot of the recovery work will involve interfacing with state and federal officials.

He addressed deficit spending by Springfield. He said Holyoke has not reached a point where deficit spending is necessary.

“Our department heads have done a great job reallocating funds,” said Morse. “There has not been any deficit spending in the city yet. This puts the city in a good position moving forward.”

In terms of the city budget, information is rapidly changing, Morse said.

“We are having continued conversations with the Baker administration for what kind of aid we could expect,” said Morse.

He said he is waiting for information on how much aid could be coming to the city in the form of more federal stimulus packages.

He assured the council a proposed fiscal year 2021 budget will be filed to councilors by the required May 15 due date, 45 days before the next fiscal year is supposed to start. He noted a proposed budget will be filed, but the document will be fluid as the situation with the pandemic continues.

## Counseling hotline reaches milestone

On April 24, Mass2-1-1 and its Call2Talk emotional support and suicide prevention hotline reached over 50,000 calls regarding Covid-19. Mass2-1-1 is a program created and staffed by the United Ways of Massachusetts, and designated by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency as the official hotline for Covid-19.

“All of us at United Way and Mass2-1-1 are proud of our Mass2-1-1 and Call2Talk call takers for doing such an outstanding job over these last 50,000 Covid-19-related calls from the citizens

of the commonwealth. As time goes on, calls are becoming much more stressful and emotional, so stay strong, team!” said Paul Mina, executive director of Mass2-1-1.

Any resident of Massachusetts with questions about Covid-19 or needs such as unemployment or food aid caused by the pandemic can call 2-1-1 at any time, from any phone in Massachusetts, in over 150 languages.

For more information about the United Way of Pioneer Valley, visit [uwpv.org](http://uwpv.org).

### **NECBL**, from page 1

This decision was reached after a careful and thoughtful review of the guidance from federal, state and local officials, the leadership of our host communities, and recommendations from the CDC and medical community. The conclusion was that canceling the 2020 season was necessary for the health, safety and well-being of our players, coaches, umpires, volunteers, fans and host families.

We understand that this decision will result in hardship and disappointment to our student-athletes who have already lost their college spring baseball season. For this reason, it breaks our hearts and runs counter to our competitive instincts and spirit. However, our first priority and obligation must always be the health and well-being of our players and our community. We promise to use this time out, and all of our resources, to make our 2021 season something truly special for our players, coaches and fans.

We are part of the communities that host our member teams. We encourage our teams, as organizations,

individually and working with their volunteers, to support community first responders and their local business sponsors, many of whom are restaurants that are going through difficult financial times. To show our appreciation to our host communities and supporters, we will dedicate Opening Day 2021 in each of our venues to thank, honor and support community organizations and first responders who serve on the front lines of combating COVID-19.

The New England Collegiate Baseball League is a wooden bat college summer league that fields teams in all six New England states. Partially funded by Major League Baseball, the NECBL started play in 1994 and enjoyed its 25th-year anniversary season last summer. The New England League has sent over 150 alumni to the Major Leagues and has had nearly 100 alumni drafted in each of the last 10 Major League Baseball Drafts.

The Valley Blue Sox are the main local team to Western Massachusetts in the NECBL. The Blue Sox have won two league championship in 2017 and 2018, and were in the semifinal round in 2019.



# RVs needed to help health workers to self-isolate

By Dalton Zbierski  
dzbierski@turley.com

When medical workers leave work after fighting the Covid-19 outbreak, one group of volunteers is helping keep them from infecting their loved ones at home. Working in conjunction with Baystate Health, the members of RVs for Healthcare Heroes MA is helping healthcare workers self-isolate by temporarily donating recreational vehicles to be parked on the workers' property and used as a kind of quarantine housing. Organizer Keith Clancy explained how the initiative works.

"We're reaching out and finding RVs to be donated to employees who are exposed to Covid-19 on a daily basis. Their concern is what they're bringing home to their families. This helps them safeguard their family members who are at a significant risk," said Clancy. Many of the individuals that the program assists live with children or elderly family members who are significantly vulnerable to the novel coronavirus. Baystate Health provides Clancy with a list of individuals who need the temporary housing, and the community group locates available RVs. The process is entirely confidential,

and only limited personal information is required to participate. Clancy acknowledged that it's a lot to ask an RV owner to lend such a large piece of property to a stranger, particularly during a pandemic. He complimented the benefactors who have thus far contributed to the program. "It's amazing, the fact that these people are stepping up and helping out, which we're using as our tagline. They are entrusting these people with significant assets because it's the right thing to do. Their generosity cannot be put into words. Our gratefulness can't be put into words," said Clancy.

Each RV will be professionally sanitized before being returned to its owner. RVs for Healthcare Heroes MA also provides professional help to set up the RV at the healthcare worker's home. "We have to consider many things; there's a lot of moving pieces," he said. "When you set up an RV in someone's driveway, you have to get the clearances through the town and exemptions to any bylaws, and things of that nature. We also need to be sure that the septic is taken care of. We have entities that will come in and pump out the grey and

See *HELP*, page 11

# Narcotics recovery groups take their 12 steps to Internet

By Elise Linscott  
elinscott@turley.com

Jeremy F. has been clean from drugs and alcohol for 38 years. In that time, he's seen other newcomers go from hitting rock bottom to living healthy and sober. Jeremy now serves as the New England Regional Web Chair for Narcotics Anonymous, and said he understands the importance of staying connected and spreading the message of organizations like NA to people who need it. Since the coronavirus outbreak, the 73-year-old also has been working tirelessly with local groups, enabling them to get online. "I believe without meetings, addicts will die," Jeremy said. "Especially newcomers. I feel a very keen responsibility to make sure they get the information. And that meant getting them all the Zoom information online for them." While he isn't worried about his own recovery being in jeopardy, he's seen how physical distancing and social isolation has affected others. Just last week, he received an email through NA's website from a man who said he was hitting rock bottom with cocaine and really needed help. Jeremy sent a

note back with information for a Zoom meeting happening that night. The meetings have also given him an opportunity to connect with old friends. Jeremy currently lives in Carver, near Plymouth in Eastern Massachusetts. He used to live in Maine; thanks to Zoom, he's able to log on and participate in meetings with his Maine NA community and see more familiar faces. Of the 50 NA groups in Western Massachusetts, 13 have migrated online, while the other 37 haven't been meeting, he said. Zoom information and a schedule can be found through the NA New England Region website at nerna.org. "The way something like NA works is a person who learns how to be clean can easily tell anyone else their experience," Jeremy said. "They don't have to be a psychologist, they don't have to be eloquent, they just have to talk about of their own experience. And if we don't get together to talk about, to share our experience and give other people guidance and comfort and support, it's just not going to work." Many local Alcoholics Anonymous groups have also been meeting virtually through Zoom. The Area 31 Intergroup, which covers all of Western

Massachusetts, has a full schedule and Zoom meeting IDs at area31aa.org. They're offered daily, with a variety of formats including speaker meetings, discussion groups and literature-focused groups who read and share from texts like the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 Steps and Traditions. Groups like AA and NA follow a traditional 12-step process to recovery. Other options for people struggling with addictive behaviors and substance misuse disorders include SMART Recovery, which stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training and follows a science-based approach emphasizing self-empowerment and self-reliance, according to the organization's website. SMART also offers meetings daily through Zoom. There are also recovery groups based in Buddhist principles, including Recovery Dharma and Refuge Recovery. These groups, along with SMART Recovery, address addictions ranging from substances like drugs and alcohol to behavioral addictions like co-dependency, eating disorders and sexual maladaptive behaviors, whereas NA and AA groups focus on addictions to particular substances.

One challenge Jeremy and other groups have faced is adequately reaching newcomers, especially those who don't have access to the Internet. "It used to be with in-person meetings, people would come in, they'd get greeted and in NA it was common to hug, sort of like shaking hands in normal society," Jeremy said. "Of course, that's very welcoming to feel like you're hugged and wanted, and people can see each other, they can pick up the emotional tone in the room. At the end of the meeting, people mill around, people will spot newcomers and go over and talk to them, and maybe offer a phone number or talk about going out for coffee and ice cream. Newcomers really get a chance to be drawn into the fellowship." "When I was new, I felt a sense of being loved. I felt a sense of being really wanted. It's incredibly attractive. It made me want to stay. We can do something through online meetings, but we can't really duplicate that." Jeremy said recently, he's been attending more meetings than ever. While he hasn't seen anyone identify as a newcomer in those half-dozen meetings, he said he's glad for the mutual support and ability to connect with others in recovery during this difficult time.

## TOURISM, from page 1

May 1. Joining Lesser were Mary Kay Wydra, president of the Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau, and John Doleva, president and CEO of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. "Every family and small business has felt pain from this crisis, but we know one sector that has been particularly hard hit is our vital tourism and hospitality industry, which is the third largest source of employment for Massachusetts families," Lesser said. "We must all work together to keep families safe, stop the spread of this virus, and ensure our economy recovers." According to Wydra, tourism and hospitality has been "hard hit" by state and local orders closing non-essential business, limiting gatherings to 10 or fewer people and keeping six feet of separation between others. She said since Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker issued his stay-at-home advisory in March, there have been 118 pieces of lost business in Western Massachusetts, which represent business and trade conventions at places like the MassMutual Center in Springfield and the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield. That equates to roughly \$49 million in lost revenue to the local economy coming from sources including food and retail vendors and booked hotel rooms. "Hopefully the numbers won't keep climbing," Wydra said.

### Trickle Effect

But more than just individual businesses struggling, Wydra said the shutdown also hampers state and municipal revenues through sales, meal and occupancy taxes. Doleva, of Wilbraham, said he and the staff at the Hall of Fame were looking forward to re-opening the Hall in mid-June, which had been closed starting Feb. 5 to complete a multi-million dollar renovation project. They were also looking forward to hosting some of the world's greatest basketball personalities for the annual enshrinement ceremony, which was set to celebrate the late Kobe Bryant, who was killed with his daughter and seven others in a helicopter crash in January, and who was inducted into the Hall in his first year of eligibility. "We get 60 percent of our visitation from Memorial Day to Labor Day," Doleva said, noting the shutdown will have a "significant effect" on the Hall. "People have a thirst for sports and doing things that aren't necessarily crowds." He said with the Hall of Fame, trade shows and other leisure activities closed or canceled for the immediate future, the impact has and will trickle into other businesses. Without assistance, he estimates as much as 40 percent of local restaurants may not recover from the shutdown. "This was a thriving sector," Lesser said, noting the impact was sudden and immediate. "This was speeding along the highway and slamming on the brakes." "Pent-Up Demand" Wydra said that some are projecting the economic hit to the travel and tourism

sector could be as high as nine to 11 times worse than that experienced in the aftermath of 9/11. In Western Mass., she said the busiest months are May, August and September. At least for now, scheduled events have already been canceled into August. "We are anticipating pent-up demand," Wydra said, expressing her hope that once businesses are allowed to re-open, spending will resume. GSCVB, Wydra said, is approaching the recovery in three phases: Inspire, Inquire and Explore. They are currently in the Inspire phase, where the organization is trying to get people to think about Western Mass and the varied attractions in Downtown Springfield as well the outdoor recreation opportunities up and down the Pioneer Valley. With May 3-9 being National Tourism Week, she said the organization has created postcards promoting the region and are in the process of developing a video. The marketing and promotional materials will promote Western Mass. in the New York and Boston markets, which compete with the Pioneer Valley for tourism dollars. With the Inquire phase, she said they anticipate folks will begin to travel and spend their dollars close to home, and ultimately, get out and explore the region once more. Doleva said one way folks can help the local economy is through booking events in the region, looking at the fall and next summer when life is likely to normalize. Wydra said individuals can try to help businesses at the cash register, utilizing the limited services available, as "everyone has bills to pay."

### Opportunity

Lesser told Turley Publications that the closures are designed to help prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, but all government officials must work to ensure necessary aid reaches the people most in need. "We need to avoid temporary closures from becoming permanent," he said. "I know how urgent this is and we are doing everything we possibly can." Lesser said his focus has been on helping communities and businesses get the resources they need to get through. A challenge, he noted, is that there are parallel crises – health and economic – and there is a need to address both at the state level. While there is a "deep and very severe recession," he said he and his colleagues are working together to ensure communities and businesses receive the resources they need to rebuild on both fronts. "We're going to work together and we're going to overcome," Lesser said. "This is a moment of great test and consequence to our whole world." During the live stream session, Doleva said the shutdown poses an opportunity for the region and state to respond together and rebuild. "I think this is an opportunity to show your colleagues and demonstrate to all the citizens of the State how important hospitality and tourism is because it has a lot of jobs, it drives a lot of tax revenue," he said. "This is a real time as we come out of this that we can elevate the respect of the hospitality and tourism industry."



Social Security Matters

Can my husband get a spouse benefit from me?

By Russell Gloor  
Guest columnist

Dear Rusty: I'm wondering if my husband can submit a "restricted application for spousal benefits only." He is 76-years-old, has been receiving his benefit since 2005. His present benefit is \$263.50. I am 74-years-old, receiving my benefit since 2007. My present benefit is \$931. Am I to understand that he could be receiving half of my amount rather than his smaller amount? Signed: Inquiring Wife

Dear Inquiring Wife: Your husband isn't eligible to file a "restricted application for spousal benefits only" because he is already collecting his own Social Security benefits and because he is past 70 years of age. But he should probably be receiving a spousal benefit from you because his benefit is so much lower than yours. From what you've written, you both claimed your Social Security benefits when you were 62 years of age. That means you both took a 25 percent cut in benefits from what you would have gotten at your full retirement age of 66.

Spousal benefits are based upon FRA benefit amounts, even if you claimed benefits earlier. So, since your FRA benefit amount would have been about \$1,164 and your husband's FRA benefit would have been about \$330, by my calculations he should now be receiving a spousal benefit of about \$516 instead of his benefit of \$263.50. The computation for that is: Take half of your FRA benefit amount (\$582) minus your husband's FRA benefit amount (\$330); the difference (\$252) is added to his own current benefit (\$264) to get \$516 as his possible spousal benefit (note the actual numbers from Social Security may vary somewhat). This probably means that when you claimed your benefit two years after your husband claimed his, your husband didn't apply for his spousal benefit (and it wasn't awarded automatically by Social Security).

I suggest your husband contact Social Security as soon as possible and make an appointment to apply for his spousal benefits. Since he has been entitled to that benefit for some time now, he can also request six months of retroactive spousal benefits which they will pay in a lump-sum and adjust his monthly benefit to what he is entitled to as your spouse. There is also a possibility that, when you filed, Social Security failed to notify your husband he was eligible for a spouse benefit, in which case he may be able to collect his spouse benefit back to the date he became eligible. Your husband should contact Social Security directly at either 1-800-772-1213, or at your local office (find it at [www.ssa.gov/locator](http://www.ssa.gov/locator)) to make an appointment to apply for his spousal benefit from you. And, usually, this application can be accomplished over the phone.

See SECURITY page 7



Poetry Corner

Home – Hope Not Alone

*Home, I hope not alone.  
Time to forgive... include yourself.  
Do something your passionate about.  
Trade off told...  
If your down and lonely – Call somebody.  
Your important as anyone else in dignity,  
Now those who get too depressed,  
No suicide, no drugs and don't escape.  
Whatever it is... It will pass.  
Just remember your worth more.  
Lots of people love you...  
And will be there.  
Remember, your heart more important than negative thought.  
Talk to God in prayer.  
There is always a tradeoff in this life.  
Ask God for righteous values and good decisions.  
Find someone to uplift you, nourish you, motivate you in integrity.  
I'll say a prayer too!  
God loves you!  
Before You said: I'm sorry – He has forgiven you.  
Peace love and Joy and especially "Happy Mothers Day" to all Mothers.  
Make their day "Special."*

Thomas J. Kennedy  
Holyoke poet-International

CHECK OUT ALL THE

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**the Sun**

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A Quote

OF NOTE

"Our attitudes control our lives. Attitudes are a secret power working twenty-four hours a day, for good or bad. It is of paramount importance that we know how to harness and control this great force."

Irving Berlin

Letters to the Editor Policy

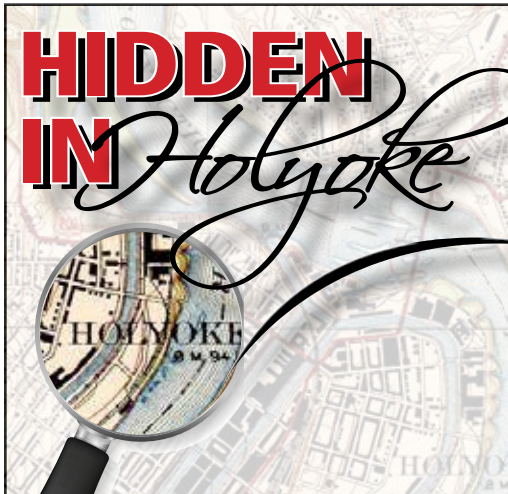
Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to [thesun@turley.com](mailto:thesun@turley.com). Mailed letters can be sent to The Sun, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.



Each week, The Holyoke Sun will feature a photo of a distinctive place, landmark, sculpture, sign or other recognizable object located somewhere in the city.

Think you know what or where it is? Readers are encouraged to submit their guesses to "Hidden in Holyoke" via email to [TheSun@Turley.com](mailto:TheSun@Turley.com). In order to qualify for the weekly contest, entries must be received by Wednesday at noon for inclusion into Friday's edition. Please include your full name with your guess in an email to [TheSun@turley.com](mailto:TheSun@turley.com). If more than one correct answer is received, the names of all those who submitted guesses will be listed. For more information, contact The Holyoke Sun at 413-283-8398.

Last week's  
"Hidden in Holyoke"  
was a part of the building of  
Lynch School  
on Northampton Street.



Why I think of asparagus on Mother's Day

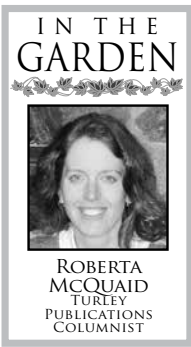
It was four years ago that I got asparagus crowns for Mother's Day! When I think back I laugh on the inside thinking of just how perfect a gift it was. Some women get jewelry and I get asparagus. Good thing my husband knows that I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Just yesterday we walked around the yard and remarked at the tiny spears popping up; it was honestly a very nice memory associated with a special day. In the event you are the lucky recipient of asparagus crowns this Sunday, or if you are simply in the market to install a bed of this vegetable, read on.

Once asparagus is planted it will return, season after season for many years, perhaps 20 or more. Keep this in mind when choosing the location of your asparagus patch...you may have to live with your decision a long time. Some gardeners prefer to prepare a site separate from the vegetable garden while others locate it within the main gardening space. Each has its pros and cons. With the later approach, the bed can be inspected during the entire growing season, not only when the plants are productive. If you take this

approach keep in mind that the ferny foliage gets quite tall by summer, so site it in the northern most row of the garden so that it won't shade out other plants. By planting the asparagus in a separate location you can also better cater to the plants' unique needs.

In order to thrive, asparagus plants require full sun, fertile soil, a neutral pH, and a weed-free bed. If time allows prepare the site in the fall prior to spring planting by removing the sod from grassy areas and by making the necessary adjustments to the soil with the addition of lime and balanced organic fertilizers. A soil test will determine accurate amounts for your site.

Once asparagus crowns have been purchased you shouldn't wait too long to plant them or they will dry out. At first look, the roots look like fleshy white tentacles of an octopus radiating out from its head! If planting ASAP is unlikely store them in moist sphagnum moss until you are able to get them in the ground. New



advice recommends planting the crowns in trenches 8 to 10 inches deep. It is helpful to incorporate additional lime and bone meal thoroughly into the bottom of the planting furrow. Set plants on small mounds of soil 12 to 18 inches apart in the row and cover with 2 inches of soil. As the spears poke through this first layer of soil and begin to fern out, gradually fill in the trench with a mixture of soil and finished compost. It should take six weeks for the furrow to be completely filled in. Water regularly and topdress with fertilizer in August of the first year and every spring thereafter. A thick application of compost at this time will also enhance fertility, while liming annually will help keep the pH neutral.

New studies indicate that spears can be harvested for a week long period the year after planting. Simply cut with a sharp knife at the soil surface. The following year expand your harvest to four weeks; by year three a full harvest season of eight weeks is possible. After harvest

let the foliage grow, once winter killed it can be cut back and removed from the garden site in case it harbors insect eggs. Good hygiene and hand picking will reduce populations of the asparagus beetle and other culprits of the asparagus patch.

My husband lovingly broke his back helping me clear the sod and remove the stones, shall I say boulders, from the area destined to be the asparagus patch. Maybe by Sunday the spears will be tall enough to harvest, that would be neat, indeed. And what about this year's gift? Well along the same theme I have a project up my sleeve. A new picket fence perhaps!

Here's wishing everyone out there a Happy Mother's Day!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [ekennedy@turley.com](mailto:ekennedy@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

In My Backyard

Massachusetts Audubon Society reported two sandhill cranes in a field in Ashfield.

The sandhill crane is a heron-like bird that is about 45 inches long. It has a dark, red patch on its forehead. The feathers are gray with some rusty-colored ones on its back and wings. Preening its feathers with iron-laden mud possibly causes this.

Sandhill cranes form large flocks in winter and during migration. Courtship displays are often seen during migration and involve graceful leaps off the ground as if dancing. Sandhill cranes summer on prairies and tundra. In winter, they feed on agricultural fields.



Ellenor Downer

really picked up at noon. I hope we make it through this storm without any power outages." She also said, "I am staying at home, not going anywhere. Being at home, I am also enjoying my springtime flowers. Over the past month, I got to watch them pop up out of the ground and now they are blooming. I have bold bright yellow with the daffodils and the forsythia, and tiny purple flowers here and there."

Ware resident

A Ware resident has been attracting birds for 30-plus years at his home about a mile from Windsor Dam. He has open field, pine groves and deciduous trees around his house, as well as a brook. The different habitats attract many different bird varieties including: juncos, robins, chickadees, tufted titmice, goldfinch, grackles, hairy woodpeckers, red-breasted woodpeckers, downy woodpeckers, pileated woodpeckers, pine warblers, white-breasted nuthatch, phoebes, purple finches, chipping sparrows, house sparrows, brown creeper, cerulean warbler, bluebird, red-breasted nuthatch, hawks, turkeys and more. He has about 40 turkeys in his yard from October until about April, then they return to the woods.

Juncos and hummingbirds

The last day I saw a dark-eyed junco was Thursday, April 23. For over a week, I only saw one male dark-eyed junco. Now that the junco headed north, I will clean my nectar feeder and boil sugar and water for the ruby-throated hummingbirds. I mix a one to four sugar water mix and then boil it to make sure all the sugar dissolves. Usually, I see hummingbirds around Mother's Day.

People may report a bird sighting or bird-related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100 or emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com.

**West Brookfield birds**

A West Brookfield resident said she had "yellow" goldfinches, bluebirds, cardinals, red-winged blackbirds, blue jays and lots of woodpeckers. She has a sanctuary in her backyard. She said she also saw a fisher cat under her window and it took one of her chickens. She wanted to warn residents to keep their cats indoors due to the fisher cats. She also has a fox with kits.

**Barre birds**

A Barre couple took a walk and saw a flock of red-winged blackbirds at the swampy area on Gilbert Road not too far from the intersection of Gilbert and Phillipston Roads. She said, "They were beautiful. I had not seen a flock of them before."

**Oakham resident**

I received an email from an Oakham resident. She said, "I am enjoying the birds, by watching them and listening to them sing. On nice days, I have been opening my windows to let the fresh air in. Today my windows are closed, but I can hear still them sing in between the wind gusts. Wow, the winds



Paula Ouimette, the author's daughter, drew this sandhill crane.

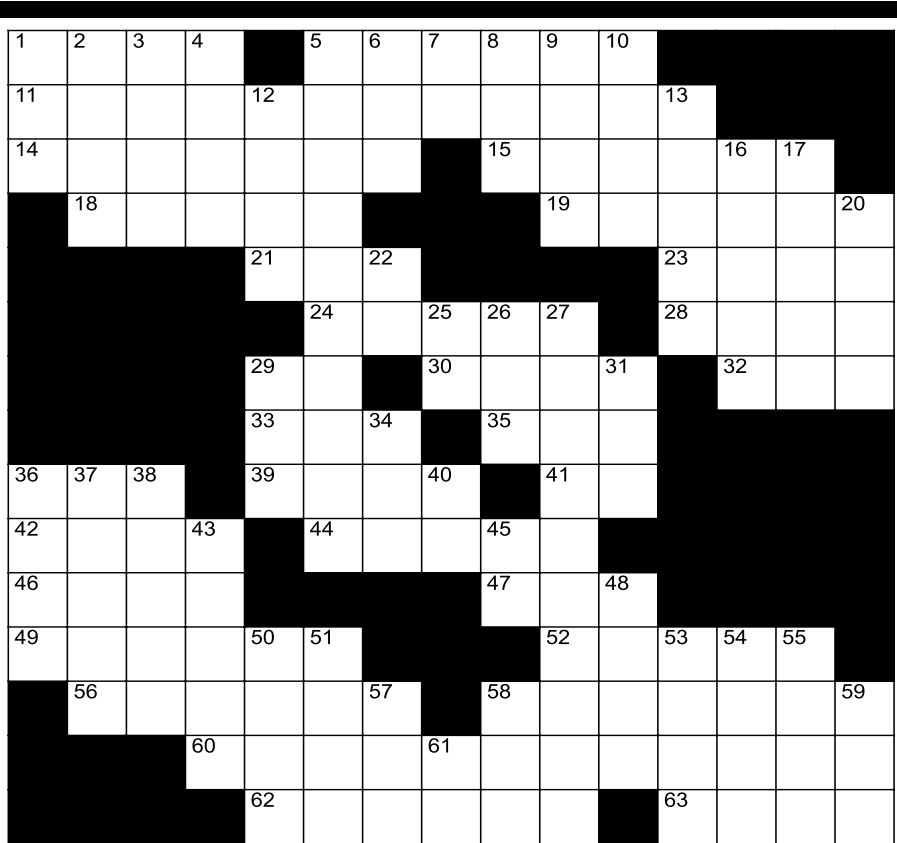
SECURITY, from page 6

Please note that all of the above assumes that your husband's current benefit isn't being reduced due to a non-covered pension which causes the Windfall Elimination Provision to lower his benefit amount, and which would cause the Government Pension Offset to severely alter, or even eliminate, his spousal benefit.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It pres-

ents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website ([amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org).

Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



CLUES ACROSS

- |                                   |                                     |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Expression of sorrow or pity   | 36. Passports are some              | 4. A type of gin                  | 34. Brew  |
| 5. Not bad                        | 39. Snake-like fish                 | 5. Torments                       | 36. Religious leader                                |
| 11. NYC Mayor                     | 41. Military flyers (abbr.)         | 6. One point south of due east    | 37. Indigo bush                                     |
| 14. Essays                        | 42. Popular computers               | 7. Actor Pacino                   | 38. Burn with a hot liquid                          |
| 15. Walk lightly                  | 44. Ecological stage                | 8. Feline                         | 40. Jr.'s father                                    |
| 18. Those who utilize             | 46. Wings                           | 9. Chinese dynasty                | 43. Ray-finned fish genus                           |
| 19. Actress Judd                  | 47. Used in combination             | 10. Short cries for help          | 45. Morning   |
| 21. One-time community of nations | 49. Laid back                       | 12. Straits can sometimes be this | 48. Straight line passing from side to side (abbr.) |
| 23. Norwegian river               | 52. Princess's headgear             | 13. Further                       | 50. S-shaped line                                   |
| 24. Unconscious states            | 56. Musical composition             | 16. Variety shows                 | 51. Small bunch of hay                              |
| 28. Make muddy                    | 58. Famed Falls                     | 17. Supernatural                  | 53. Ripened   |
| 29. Unit of volume                | 60. Reiterations                    | 20. A university in Connecticut   | 54. Crater on Mars                                  |
| 30. Consciousnesses               | 62. Eras                            | 22. Atomic #27                    | 55. Humanities                                      |
| 32. Envision                      | 63. Track event                     | 25. Of I                          | 57. Of the ears                                     |
| 33. When you aim to get there     | CLUES DOWN                          | 26. We all have one               | 58. To the ___ degree                               |
| 35. Electronic data               | 1. Defensive nuclear weapon (abbr.) | 27. Religious guilds              | 59. Wood  |
|                                   | 2. Instead                          | 29. This can sting                | 61. Cools your home                                 |
|                                   | 3. Gifts for the poor               | 31. Sunscreen rating              |   |



# Take care, keep wild animals wild

With a stay-at-home advisory in effect during the coronavirus emergency, Massachusetts residents are spending a lot of time in their gardens and yards. How many people know what to do if they find a baby bird, a nest of newborn bunnies, or another young animal in their yard this spring?

The arrival of spring means the arrival of young wildlife. Every year, the lives of young creatures are disturbed by people who take young animals from the wild in a well-intentioned attempt to “save” them, but this often does more harm than good. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife recently reminded residents that young wildlife belong in the wild and should be left alone.

Finding a young animal alone does not mean it’s been abandoned or needs to be rescued. Adult animals are often nearby and visit their young only occasionally, to avoid detection from predators.

Nearly all wild birds and mammals are protected by law; they may not legally be taken from the wild or kept as pets. Most people quickly find that they can’t properly care for young wildlife, and many animals soon die in the hands of people trying to help. Young wildlife removed from the wild are also denied important natural learning experiences which help them survive on their own. Even if these animals are eventually released back into the wild, their chances of survival are reduced. Often, the care given to young wildlife results in the animal forming an attachment to humans, and it may return to places where people live, only to be attacked by domestic animals or hit by cars. With little fear of humans, once-tamed wildlife may



If you find a fawn, MassWildlife recommends leaving it alone, even if it is seen alone for a few days.

Submitted photos

become nuisances or injure people.

- If a baby bird is found: While baby birds may look helpless, they do not need assistance unless there are clear signs of injury, like a broken wing. If a hatchling or nestling (a young bird without feathers) is found outside the nest, try to return it to its nest or create an artificial nest. The parents will not reject it if it is touched. If a fledgling (a young, fully feathered bird) is found outside the nest, leave it alone. While it is spending some time hopping around on the ground learning how to fly, the parents are usually nearby still taking care of it. If a fledgling is found near a road or exposed to danger, it can be moved to a safer, sheltered location nearby. Young birds naturally have a low survival rate,

which keeps populations in balance with available resources.

- If a fawn is found: Young deer are born in late May and early June. Even if a fawn is seen alone for several days, leave it alone. The animal may be motionless and seem vulnerable, but this is the normal behavior for a fawn and the mother (doe) is probably feeding or bedded nearby. Fawns are safest when left alone, because their camouflaging color helps them remain undetected. Does visit their fawns to nurse very infrequently, a behavior that helps fawns avoid detection by predators. If sympathetic people repeatedly visit a fawn, it can prolong separation from the doe and delay needed feeding. Fawns cannot be cared for by wildlife rehabilitators; if a fawn is visibly injured or found with its dead mother, call MassWildlife at 508-389-6300.

- If bunnies or other young mammals are found: Generally, young mammals are visited by their mother only a

few times a day, to avoid attracting predators to the young. For example, a nest of bunnies will only be visited by the adult female twice per day, to nurse the young. The young are generally safe when left alone, because their color patterns and lack of scent help them remain undetected. In most cases, it’s best to leave young animals alone.

- Keep pets leashed. Keeping pets indoors or restrained helps wildlife, as pets often like to chase and hunt songbirds and other mammals. This also helps the pets avoid health and safety dangers posed by wild animals, other pets, or automobiles.

- Contact a wildlife rehabilitator for advice. In almost all cases, it’s best to leave wildlife alone and let nature take its course. In the rare case of a young animal with a dead parent, or there are visible signs of injury, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for assistance. An injured wild animal may be assisted, but a person must deliver the animal immediately to a licensed rehabilitator. MassWildlife licenses wildlife rehabilitators who are qualified to care for most injured or truly orphaned wildlife.



A baby bird on its own probably doesn’t need assistance, unless it has a broken wing.



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<b>SLICED IN OUR DELI</b>		
USDA INSP. ROAST BEEF..... <b>\$5.99</b> lb		
USDA INSP. PROVOLONE CHEESE..... <b>\$3.99</b> lb		
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# SPORTS

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## Summer leagues now coming into question

*Following the closure of spring sports, many summer leagues are being forced to do the same*

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – In just a short period of time, the landscape of even summer sports has now changed with a number of baseball leagues cancelling play and others postponed indefinitely while the leagues wait out the “surge.”

But in the case of some very talented athletes, the 2020 baseball season has been completely shuttered.

First, it was the postponement of Major League Baseball along with the complete cancellation of spring sports for the collegiate level. Now, two of the most prominent college leagues have cancelled their seasons for the summer, citing the risks involved for the league as a whole.

The Cape Cod Baseball League and the New England Collegiate Baseball League have cancelled their 2020 campaigns, which were set to start in June. The cancellation leaves no opportunities for teams to play at all in the 2020 season. The summer leagues, like college season were often an additional place for star athletes to get exposure, play against some of the best competition in the country, and receive additional looks for scouts from the major leagues.

The cancellation of baseball has also filtered down to the high school and youth levels as well.

With parks and recreation activities shut down, baseball and softball is shut down at the youth level. Spring sports were cancelled last week at the high school level, and even recreational softball leagues have

been completely shut down. There are still some leagues that are hopeful.

Like high school athletic directors, many recreational leagues have begun making shortened schedules or modified schedules that would accommodate play once fields are opened up.

However, as the surge remains present in Massachusetts, it is hard to forecast when play in many leagues will open up.

The Pioneer Valley Summer Soccer League is open to holding a modified schedule if needed, but it is also still holding out hope to holding its regular season as scheduled. The season typically starts in the third week of June.

Depending on how the re-opening plan is phased, there is still a possibility of that, or a better possibility of the season going deeper into the summer.

One league that teenagers were hopeful would not be cancelled is American Legion baseball. However, that may be the case after the chairman of District 3 recommended the season be cancelled. Most area teams, such as Agawam, Belchertown, Wilbraham, Aldenville, and Monson play in District 3. There are also several Junior Legion teams in the area, with Holyoke set to rejoin the ranks.

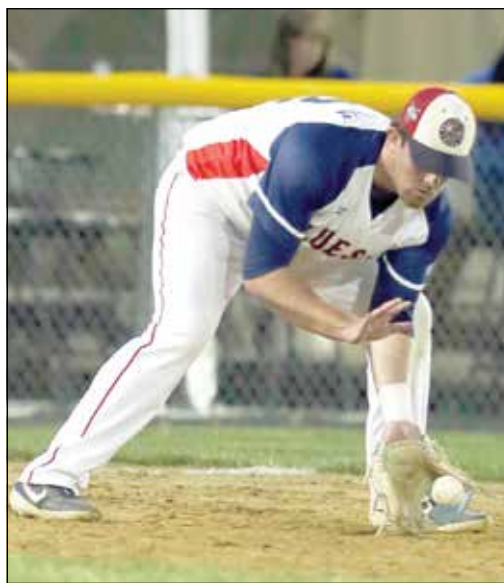
The American Legion had cancelled its regional and national tournaments, but there was hope its regular season would take place in areas that were deemed safe from major coronavirus outbreaks. The national tournament was set to take place late in the summer in North Carolina.

The stay-at-home advisory along with the non-essential business closure remains in effect through May 18. It is not known if the order will be lifted, but a re-opening plan is supposed to be submitted by a committee on that date.



American Legion baseball is also in danger of being cancelled this summer.

File photos



College baseball will not be played in the area as the NECBL cancelled its season. The Valley Blue Sox are based in Holyoke.



Recreational leagues like the Valley Wheel Baseball League and the Quabbin Valley League are all on hold waiting to see if Massachusetts “re-opens.”

## Senior athletes to be highlighted in coming weeks

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

The Turley Publications sports department is looking to honor the senior athletes who have had their spring seasons cancelled by the coronavirus pandemic.

Over the next several weeks, the sports section will have stories and photos about the various spring sports teams

that were never even able to have a practice, and eventually saw their full season cancelled.

We will be talking with spring coaches and athletic directors, but would also love to hear from senior players about their feelings about the spring season being cancelled.

We hope to also publish action photos of seniors from previous seasons, though parents and coaches are encour-

aged to send photos of seniors they would like to see published in the upcoming editions of the paper.

All submissions can be made to Sports Editor Gregory A. Scibelli at sports@turley.com. In the subject line, please identify the school and sport you are writing in about. Senior athletes are also encouraged to write in to talk about the season that wasn't.

## Claremont Speedway event cancelled

REGION – Tri Track Open Modified Series officials announced on Saturday, in collaboration with Claremont Speedway, that the event originally scheduled for May 24 will not happen as scheduled.

New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu released new guidance for the state on Friday that will not allow gatherings to

occur for the race event.

The Tri Track Open Modified Series continues to keep the safety of our race teams, drivers, staff and fans in mind with decisions.

We will provide additional guidance around the 2020 schedule once it is available. Our intention is to hit the track for action this season.



# Thunderbirds Foundation announces fundraising drive

SPRINGFIELD – Today, the Springfield Thunderbirds Foundation announced the start of its “From the Heart” campaign, which will feed essential workers at non-profits, medical facilities, and public safety organizations over the coming ten weeks. The campaign kicked off today with monetary donations of \$500 to both the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and Holyoke Medical Center. Holyoke Medical Center will use the funds to purchase food for its medical staff.

“We are excited to announce our ‘From the Heart’ campaign and we are honored to support our first two recipients. Food insecurity during this time is a serious issue and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts is leading the charge to combat this across the region. Holyoke Medical Center has also stepped up in a big way for the residents of Holyoke and has gone the extra mile in treating our Vets

in the Holyoke Soldier’s Home. We are truly grateful for all these two organizations are doing for our community,” said Nathan Costa, President of the Springfield Thunderbirds.

The announcement of the “From the Heart” campaign comes on the heels of successful food deliveries to Mercy and Baystate Medical Centers in mid-April. Stephen Cincotta, a member of the Thunderbird’s local ownership group, saw the impact these donations had on front-line medical staff and reached out to the T-Birds Foundation with a generous donation to extend the program to other organizations in western Massachusetts.

“When I saw the reaction of the doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff to the food deliveries and their pictures with Boomer, I knew we could be doing more to



spread a little joy and good will to others on the front lines of this pandemic. I am proud to support the work of the T-Bird’s Foundation and grateful to the men and women who are working every day to keep us safe from harm,” said Cincotta, President and CEO of Clinical Research Management Group (CRMG).

With the campaign’s launch, the T-Bird’s Foundation will deliver food to a new organization each week for the next ten weeks to thank front-line workers making an impact in the community. The Foundation broadened the reach of its program to recognize the many diverse fields that are contributing the fight against COVID-19.

“During this time of great need in our region, we are extremely grateful to the support we have received across the com-

munity to help our neighbors at risk of hunger,” said Jillian Morgan, Corporate Relations Officer for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. “The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts remains committed to feeding all of our neighbors in need and is taking proactive steps to protect those who rely on our services. Your support keeps meals on the table during these challenging times.”

Meals will be sourced from many of the T-Birds corporate partners, including the 99 Restaurant & Pub, Buffalo Wild Wings, Theodore’s Booze, Blues & BBQ, Crazy Jake’s, Frigo’s Foods, Texas Roadhouse, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Dunkin’ Donuts and Nathan Bill’s Bar & Restaurant.

Individuals interested in supporting the campaign can contribute to the Thunderbirds’ Foundation directly: <https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/3391100>.

## Valley Wheel looking for new players

REGION – The Valley Wheel Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for the upcoming 2020 season. The league is seeking players ages 28 and up. Players turning 28 this year are eligible. However, only players 30 and older can pitch. The league plays 15 regular season games with games being held mostly on Sundays with a couple of weekday games thrown in the mix as well as a special Mother’s Day Saturday game in early May. However, due to the current circumstances, the league schedule has been pushed back. The league still plans

to play its season once bans on gatherings are lifted. The league is built on comradery, fair play, and having a good time with friends. If interested in trying out, go to [www.valleywheelbaseball.com](http://www.valleywheelbaseball.com). The rules of the league and new player forms can be found on the site. For further information, you can contact the league’s commissioner, Jim Nason at [wheel12@comcast.net](mailto:wheel12@comcast.net) or call him at (413) 433-4308. Tryouts will be take place as soon as conditions are allowed, but new player applications are still being accepted.

## Sign-ups on hold for Quabbin League

REGION – The Quabbin Valley Over-30 Baseball League is seeking new players for 2020 season. The league has six teams, several with open roster spots.

Last year, the league voted to allow players age 28 and 29 to be able to join the league, though players under 30 are not eligible to pitch. The cost of the league this season is \$192. For returning and new players, sign-ups have been placed on hold until a determination has been made on the season going forward.

The league is hopefully to begin play sometime in June or July. The season is 15 regular season games plus at least one playoff game. A modified schedule is being worked on by league officials. Games are nine innings and metal (BBCOR -3) or wood bats are allowed. Fields locations are throughout Western Mass.

For more information on the league, or if you are interested in registering, go to <https://www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org/>. The league is also in Facebook.

## ► In The News

# National Arson Awareness Week is May 3 to 9

### Fire investigations

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey announced that National Arson Awareness Week is May 3-9, 2020. This year’s theme, First Responders: Fire Investigations, Arson Laws and You!, highlights the crucial role that firefighters can play in a successful fire investigation. Firefighters are not just first responders to the fire, but to the fire investigation as well.

Firefighters are the eyes and ears of the professionals who investigate fires. As with any structure, the foundation is the most important part and firefighters lay the foundation for the scene examination. What they saw when they first responded to the fire, what suppression tactics they used, and what they observed after the fire, can all be useful clues for fire investigators. It is important for firefighters to understand that overhaul can

affect the forensic fire scene examination. Delaying overhaul whenever possible until the fire investigators arrive on scene is helpful.

Firefighters can learn more about their important role in fire investigation at the U.S. Fire Administration’s Arson Awareness Week webpage. The public can find information on how to prevent arson in their neighborhood by going to the Department of Fire Service’s Arson Awareness Week webpage.

### Team concept of fire investigation

Massachusetts has been using the team concept of fire investigation since the early 1980s. Specially trained State Police officers, assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal, work collaboratively with local fire and police department investigators, and when appropriate, agents from the federal

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. This has increased the knowledge and awareness of frontline firefighters so they may be more keenly aware of what to look for and how their tactics can affect the fire investigation. Fire and police train together at both the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and the National Fire Academy using the National Fire Protection Association Standard 921 for fire investigation. This training prepares them for the teamwork of a fire investigation.

### Accelerant detection canines

The State Police Fire and Explosion Investigation Section, assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal, has several teams of trained accelerant detection canines and handlers. These working dogs have noses that are over a hundred times more sensitive than the human

sense of smell and are trained to detect all types of ignitable liquids that could be used to start or spread a fire. The dogs are trained using a “food reward” method. They are hand fed small amounts of food many times a day after detecting ignitable liquids during training or at a fire scene. The dogs and their handlers work or train every day and never get a day off.

### Statistics

In 2018, 551 arson fires were reported to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System, accounting for 2 percent of total fires. The 134 structure arsons, 78 motor vehicle arsons, and 339 outside and other arsons caused four civilian deaths (accounting for 9 percent of civilian fire deaths), one fire service death, 13 civilian injuries and 43 fire service injuries. The estimated property loss from arson was \$5.5 million.

## High flying excitement

It’s official. UFOs do exist. Whether they are natural phenomena, unknown human technology or the workings of some advanced life-forms from beyond this world are questions that remained unanswered, but what is undeniable is that there are unknown objects – now referred to as unidentified aerial phenomena – in the skies above.

This surprising news broke early last week, when the Pentagon officially released three videos showing UAPs recorded using infrared cameras. The videos had already been released by a private company in 2017 and 2018, and the U.S. Navy had acknowledged them in September of 2019. But now the videos are available for all of the public to view. For a life-long observer of the natural world and lover of the unexplained like



Tyler Witkop

myself, the news is remarkable and exciting.

As a young boy, I immersed myself in the pages of books like Jerome Clark’s “Unexplained,” essentially an encyclopedia of unexplained sightings and phenomena across the globe, as well as TV shows like “In Search Of.” If it had to deal with hauntings, extraterrestrial life or strange creatures like Bigfoot, you can be sure I likely watched intently.

Certainly, with age and the development of analytical skills, my opinions have shifted some. Eyewitness testimony is well-known for being flawed and easily manipulated, and there are some very unreliable and outlandish claims. But I do find interesting the number of similar reports made over the years regarding all phenomena, and I have always held out hope we

would get answers.

Sadly, the recent news does nothing to answer the all-important question humanity has sought for millennia: Are we alone in the Universe?

Perhaps even more striking is that the announcement barely seemed to raise eyebrows or cause the type of pandemonium science fiction writers and policymakers predicted over generations. In fact, if you weren’t paying attention, you easily could have missed it. I almost did. Trumping the announcement has been news of the novel coronavirus and who will replace Tom Brady as quarterback of the New England Patriots.

It’s as though the people are saying ‘Yeah, of course there are UFOs. Tell us what we don’t know.’ To be fair, that sentiment is correct, as regardless of origin, the objects in the video are unknown in origin and flying in the sky, recorded and observed by military pilots.

CNN reports the Pentagon previously studied recordings of encounters with unknown objects as part of a classified program that was launched at the request of former Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada. The program, which started in 2007, ended in 2012, after an assessment determined there were higher priorities that needed funding.

Hopefully the videos lead to a renewed interest in space and the natural world. Giving me hope, anyway, is that people aren’t running in fear from what can’t be explained and that leans toward the heart of scientific discovery and exploration in general. Without fear, we can increase understanding of life anywhere in the Universe and make new technological breakthroughs. That is truly out of this world.

*Tyler Witkop is the editor of the Chicopee Register and The Wilbraham-Hampden Times.*



# horoscopes

## WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to Mother's Day.

**N L C H U**

*Answer: Lunch*

## Guess Who?

I am an R&B singer born in Michigan on May 13, 1950. At a young age, I suffered an illness that led to blindness. That didn't stop me from signing with Motown Records at age 11. I have recorded more than thirty top 10 hits during my career.

*Answer: Stevie Wonder*

You may embrace physical vitality this week, and go with that, Pisces. Maybe switch up your workout to incorporate something new.

8	9	5	2	6	7	3	4	1	1
3	7	1	8	4	9	6	2	5	5
2	4	6	1	5	3	7	9	8	7
6	2	8	3	9	1	4	5	7	7
1	3	7	4	2	5	8	6	9	9
4	5	9	7	8	6	1	3	2	3
9	1	3	6	7	2	5	8	4	4
7	8	2	5	3	4	9	1	6	5
5	6	4	9	1	8	2	7	3	3





# BUSINESS TOWN HALL NEWS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS CALENDAR COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS STORIES AREA EVENTS SPORTS



## It's easy to submit your local news!

### Turley Editorial Coverage Policies

#### CALENDAR

This section is intended to promote “free” events or ones that directly affect a volunteer-driven organization that benefits the entire community. Paid events that are not deemed fund-raisers or benefits do not qualify. Non-charitable events that charge the public for profit are not allowed as we consider that paid advertising. Deadlines vary with each individual newspaper, look inside for your deadline. We usually print one week in advance of an event, and the listings should be brief, with only time, date, location, brief activity explanation, and contact info. The best thing to do is emulate a calendar listing you like that already appeared in the paper. Each editor directly manages and edits all of the calendar entries. Artwork or photos to compliment your calendar listings are always welcomed.

#### EDUCATION

We try to be inside our public schools on a weekly basis, both in terms of sports coverage and classroom features. Our education and sports sections run 52 weeks per year. We feel school coverage is probably the single largest reflection of the communities we serve, so this paper is committed to having a strong presence there. We devote more staff and space to these sections than any other editorial realm. We do print free courtesy stories, briefs and photos submitted by teachers, sports teams and students, as we cannot possibly be at every event. If you have a photo you want to run, please include a photo caption identifying those in the image from left to right and a description of the event. Please call or e-mail the editor directly with your school event coverage requests at least three days in advance. If we can't attend, you are always encouraged to send in your own write-up and photos.

#### NEWS & FEATURES

As a paper of record, we attempt to cover all general news, personality profiles, and community features that we know about. This includes all selectmen and school committee meetings as well as spot planning board, board of health, finance, and other town meetings determined by the issue's relevance to our readers. There are the annual major community event features that we should always cover, but we are more than open to suggestions of other features to celebrate the fabric of our communities and their many interesting occupants. Our loyal advertisers provide funding for this paid staff coverage.

#### BUSINESS

Turley Publications is liberal with regard to its business coverage policies, but we do have some standards folks need to understand. First, local businesses and merchants are just as much institutions in our towns as the library and schools. Without them, there are no towns.

We will feature coverage of local businesses that are new, have a major expansion, moving, closing, under new management or ownership, celebrating a milestone anniversary, or have been thrust into the news realm. Merchants can request that coverage through the editor, or for our existing advertising clients, through their ad representatives.

#### OPINION

We love letters to the editor and guest columns. It is what the soul of this newspaper is all about. However, we don't print what we can't prove. All letters and columns must be signed and confirmed by us prior to publication. If you are alleging things that we cannot prove, we will consider that a news tip and look into it. We always encourage readers to celebrate their communities versus just slamming them. We also pen a weekly “editorial.” Some readers confuse editorials with being objective “news.” Our unsigned editorials are opinions formed after doing the research, or com-

plied through our reporters' stories and other means. We then write opinions, which do take a definitive side on issues. Editorials are not meant to be balanced to both sides like our news stories should. They are intended to opine around the facts and take a position. That's the whole point of the “opinion” page.

#### PEOPLE/MILESTONE NEWS

As a free service for our readers, we will print all births, weddings, engagements, milestone anniversaries, major birthdays, military achievements, honors and awards. We have a “people news” form available for you to submit these listings. This material is provided to us by our readers and local institutions and we do not charge to print this content.

#### SPORTS

Our sports editor and his reporters and photographers cover select varsity school games weekly as well as youth and adult sports leagues. Our team tries to be fair and spread the coverage around to all the teams, but as playoffs approach, teams making the playoffs take more precedence. We have tried hard this year to expand our coverage of youth sports, but we need coaches and players to send in their photos and write-ups.

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Assessment shows history deficit in nation’s classrooms looms large

WASHINGTON, D.C. – What happened? Six years ago, the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed an impressive improvement in knowledge about American history, among elementary and middle-school students, but now, the 2018 tests, released last week, reveal that the apparent gain has slid to 1994 levels.

The Nation’s Report Card, as the assessment is known, shows that eighth graders’ awareness of key data crashed; between 2014 and 2018 their scores fell four points, from 267 to 263, out of a maximum 500.

“Considering the fact that 2014’s report seemed to offer hope, and the trajectory was rising, the four-point decrease was a surprise,” according to education advocate, David Bruce Smith.

Coincidentally, too many children, typically in grades 4 through 12, are essentially illiterate; enough to be a cause for alarm; it might be part of the

reason for the decline. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education says “19 percent of high school graduates are functionally illiterate, which means they can’t read well enough to manage daily living and perform tasks required.”

“There seems to be a correlation between historical proficiency, and an over-the-top illiteracy rate. You absorb history mostly by reading, but if you have been lost in the system, it’s nearly impossible to learn the essentials about the past or the present.”

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos issued a statement after NAEP’s results were announced. As she put it: “America’s antiquated approach to education is creating a generation of future leaders who will not have a foundational understanding of what makes this country exceptional. We cannot continue to excuse this problem away. Instead, we need to fundamentally rethink education in America. It is the only way our stu-

dents will be able to lead our nation and the world.

“The results are stark and inexcusable. A quarter or more of America’s eighth-graders are what NAEP defines as ‘below basic’ in U.S. history, civics and geography. In the real world, this means students don’t know what the Lincoln-Douglas debates were about, nor can they discuss the significance of the Bill of Rights or point out basic locations on a map. And only 15 percent of them have a reasonable knowledge of U.S. history. All Americans should take a moment to think about the concerning implications for the future of our country,” DeVos said.

Smith is co-founder of the Grateful American Book Prize, with the late Dr. Bruce Cole, former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was created to restore enthusiasm about American history, for kids and adults.

“Our goal has been to entice students to learn about the events and people who have shaped the nation; the best way, outside of a really competent teacher, is to energize authors to think up--captivating fiction and non-fiction--that appeal to adolescents, and stimulates commitments from publishers,” said Smith.



Public Notices

**LEGAL NOTICE**  
**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**The Trial Court**  
**Probate and Family Court**  
**Hampden Division**  
**50 State Street**  
**Springfield, MA 01103**  
**(413)748-8600**  
**Docket No. HD20P0669EA**  
**Estate of:**  
**Patricia N. Lee**  
**Also Known As:**  
**Patricia Jean Lee**  
**Date of Death:**  
**February 17, 2020**  
**INFORMAL PROBATE**  
**PUBLICATION NOTICE**  
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner  
**Susan J. Jordan** of Florence, MA a Will has been admitted to informal probate.  
**Susan J. Jordan** of Florence, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.  
The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform

Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.  
5/08/2020

**CITY OF HOLYOKE**  
**GAS & ELECTRIC**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
**ELECTRIC STATION**  
**PARKING LOT & DRIVEWAY**  
**REPAVING**  
Sealed bids for the above will be received by Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept. until **2:00 p.m., June 10, 2020** at the Office of the Manager,

99 Suffolk St., Holyoke, MA 01040, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read.  
**Bid Deposit:**  
A Bid Deposit equal to 5% of the total value of the bid must accompany all bids and may be in the form of a certified, treasurer's, or cashier's check payable to HG&E from a responsible bank or trust company; cash; or a bid bond from a licensed surety payable to HG&E.  
**Prevailing Wage Rates:**  
Prevailing Wage Rates set by the Mass. Dept. of Labor & Industries shall be paid to all people engaged in work under this contract.  
**Mandatory Site Visit:**  
All Bidders must make a site visit prior to the bid due date in order for their bid to be considered valid. A site visit can be arranged by contacting Matt Saia at (413) 536-9443 or via email to msaia@hged.com  
Additional information may be obtained from:  
Yocelyn F. Delgado  
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept.  
99 Suffolk St.  
Holyoke, MA 01040

(413) 536-9308  
ydelgado@hged.com  
The right is hereby reserved to reject any or all proposals, or to accept any proposal that in the opinion of the Manager may be for the best interest of the City of Holyoke.  
Please mark sealed envelopes "Bid for Electric Station Parking Lot & Driveway Repaving" and address them to:  
**James Lavelle, Manager**  
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept.  
99 Suffolk St.  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
5/08/2020

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**The Trial Court**  
**Hampden Probate and Family Court**  
**50 State Street**  
**Springfield, MA 01103**  
**(413)748-7758**  
**Docket No. HD20P0684EA**  
**Estate of:**  
**Albert Warren Nothe**  
**Date of Death: 03/31/2020**  
**CITATION ON PETITION**  
**FOR FORMAL**  
**ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:  
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Lucinda A. Nothe** of Pompano Beach FL requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.  
The Petitioner requests that: **Lucinda A. Nothe** of Pompano Beach FL be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in an **unsupervised** administration.  
**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 05/28/2020.**  
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding.

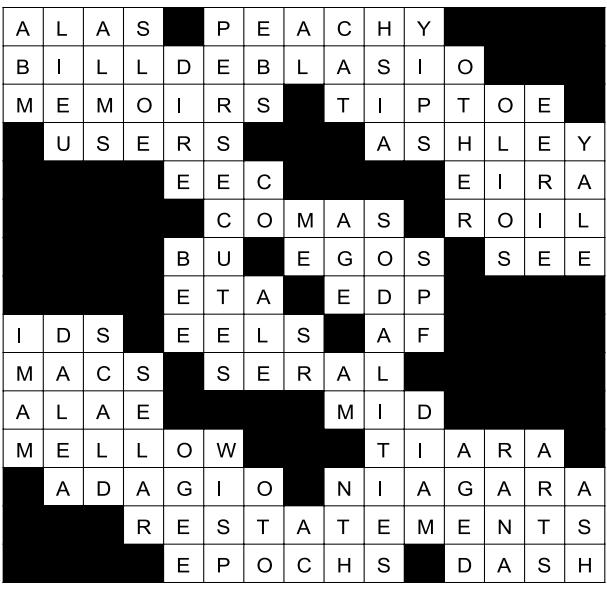
If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.  
**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)**  
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.  
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: April 29, 2020  
**Suzanne T. Seguin**  
Register of Probate  
5/08/2020

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All public notices to be published in the Holyoke Sun should be sent directly to [notices@turley.com](mailto:notices@turley.com). Jamie Joslyn processes all public notices for this newspaper and can answer all of your questions regarding these notices. Please indicate the newspapers and publication date(s) for the notice(s) in the subject line of your email. For questions regarding coverage area, procedures or cost, please call Jamie directly at 413-283-8393.

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Please check the accuracy of your public notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.



*The Sun*  
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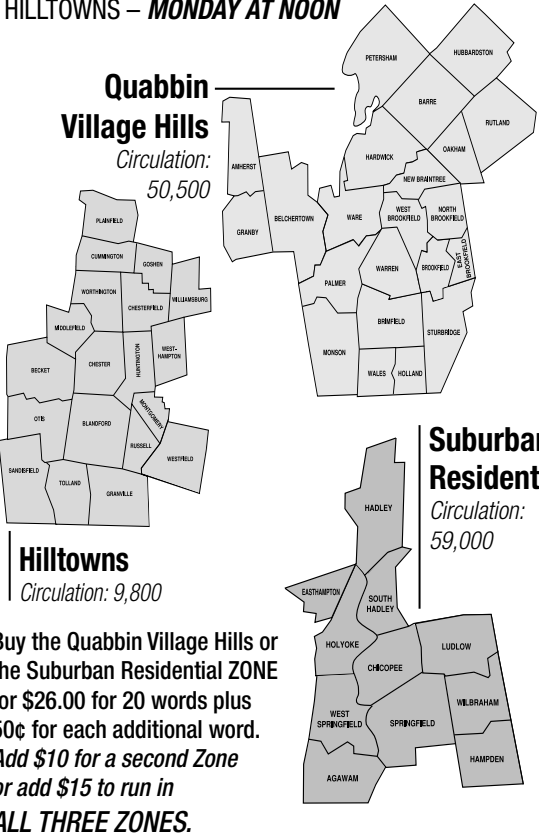
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5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Base Price \$26.00
21 Base Price \$26.50	22 Base Price \$27.00	23 Base Price \$27.50	24 Base Price \$28.00
25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
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# Fatalities double despite less traffic

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation is reporting that the rate of fatalities on Massachusetts roadways doubled in April. Although 50 percent less traffic was recorded on major highways, 28 individuals died in crashes, compared with the month of April 2019, when there were 27 deaths on roadways in the state. The high fatality rate last month, underscores the importance of not exceeding the posted speed limit, wearing a seat belt, driving sober and obeying the hands-free law.

“Our traffic and safety engineers continuously monitor roadways across the commonwealth and have identified a dangerous trend that has led to the doubling of the vehicular fatality rate in Massachusetts for the month of April,” said Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver. “During the pandemic, everyone in the commonwealth has sacrificed and used disciplined actions to keep themselves, their loved ones and our community safe. We ask that all residents use this same dedication to safety and reduce their speeds when driving.”

“Reduced traffic volume is no

excuse for excessive speed,” said Jeff Larason, director of highway safety for the Executive Office of Safety and Security. “We’re reminding everyone to drive responsibly, wear a seat belt, and watch the road for cyclists and pedestrians.”

Motor vehicle deaths occurred state-wide in April, including three deaths in a 24-hour-period on April 18 and April 19: in Richmond, on Route 41 southbound, in Hopkinton, on I-495 southbound, and in Seekonk, on I-195 eastbound. The most recent road fatality reported to MassDOT was on Saturday, May 2, occurring in Andover on I-93 near exit 42.

The commonwealth has several initiatives which seek to improve road safety, including:

- The Massachusetts Strategic Highway Safety Plan, crafted by a diverse cross section of government agencies, advocates, and other stakeholders which contains specific strategies, direct actions and legislative proposals to get Massachusetts closer towards zero deaths and to an interim goal of a 12 percent drop in five-year average fatalities

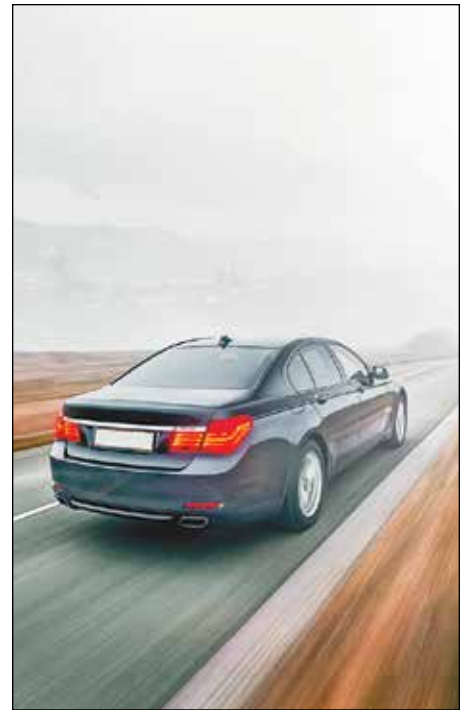
and a 21 percent drop in five-year average serious injuries.

- The 2019 Massachusetts Pedestrian Transportation Plan and 2019 Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan seek to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries for pedestrians, individuals using a wheelchair, cane or other assisted mobility device, and those riding bicycles while increasing the number of trips taken.

- MassDOT’s public education program, “Scan the Street for Wheels and Feet,” underscores the need for greater awareness on the road, citing statistics including, “1 in 4 deaths in motor vehicle crashes involve people walking or bicycling.”

MassDOT has been pleased to work collaboratively on this public safety initiative with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Boston Vision Zero, WalkBoston, MassBike, and the Safe Roads Alliance.

In addition, in January 2019, the Baker-Polito Administration filed several proposed safety bills, including the hands-free law which became law in



February 2020, with fines for violations taking effect April 1.

For more information on state initiatives, please visit [www.mass.gov/highway-safety](http://www.mass.gov/highway-safety), [www.mass.gov/service-details/pedestrian-plan](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/pedestrian-plan) and [www.mass.gov/service-details/bicycle-plan](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/bicycle-plan).

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**CASH FOR JUNK AND REPAIRABLE CARS**  
**FREE TOWING**  
**FAST SERVICE**  
**CASH PAID AS IS**  
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**Get cash for as is unwanted autos**

- Cars/trucks
- Free towing
- All makes
- All models

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**SPAYED/NEUTERED, WORMED, SHOTS, HEARTWORM TESTED, TEETH CLEANED**

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**GREYHOUND OPTIONS INC.**  
**CALL MARY AT 413-566-3129**  
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**OR GO TO**  
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### FOR RENT



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## REAL ESTATE

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### FOR RENT

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**TAX FILING DEADLINE HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO JULY 15**



588 Center Street  
Ludlow, MA 01056  
[www.ajefinancial.com](http://www.ajefinancial.com)  
(413)589-1671

**We are still continuing to process tax returns through drop off and electronic processes.**  
Our office hours are Monday thru Thursday 9am to 4pm  
Please call or email to make arrangements

**CHANTEL BLEAU**  
**ACCOUNTING SERVICES**

**For Full Accounting & Tax Service**  
**Registered Tax Return Preparer**

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**413-967-8364**

Call For An Appointment



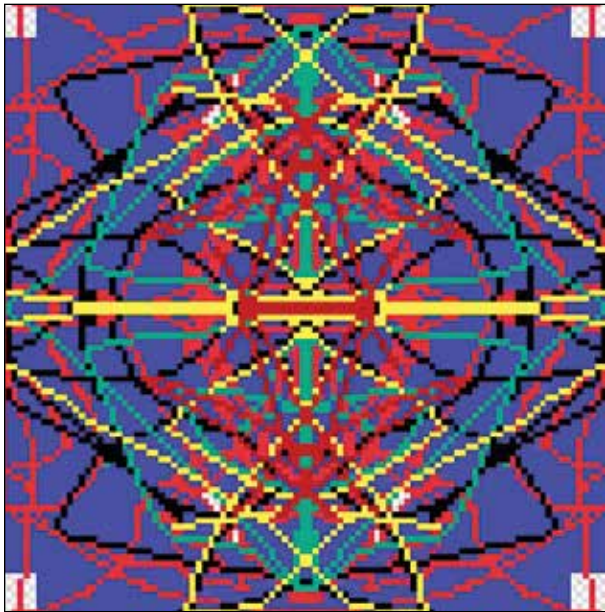
The IRS does not endorse any particular individual tax return preparer. For more information on tax preparers go to [irs.gov](http://irs.gov).

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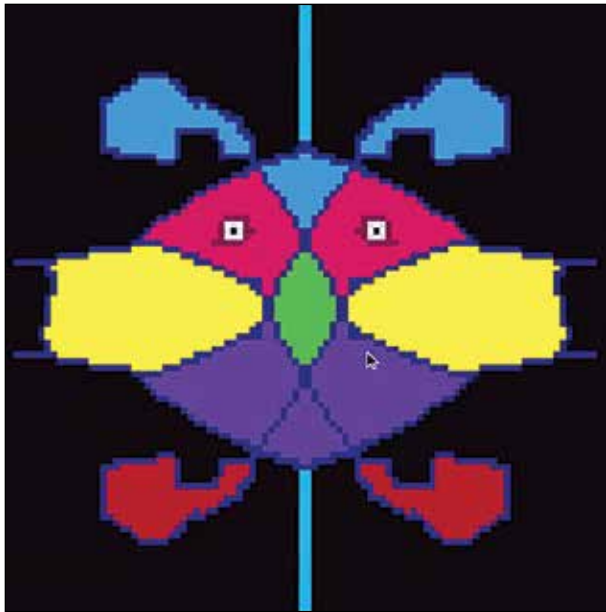
**413-283-8393 • 1-800-824-6548**



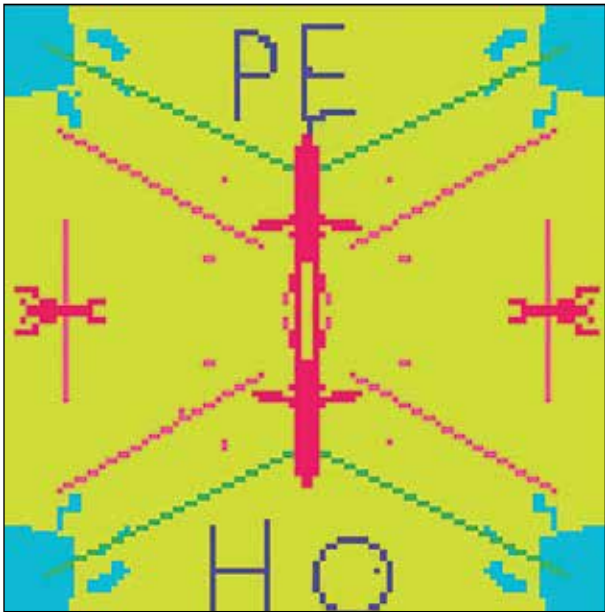
REMOTE ARTWORK ON DISPLAY



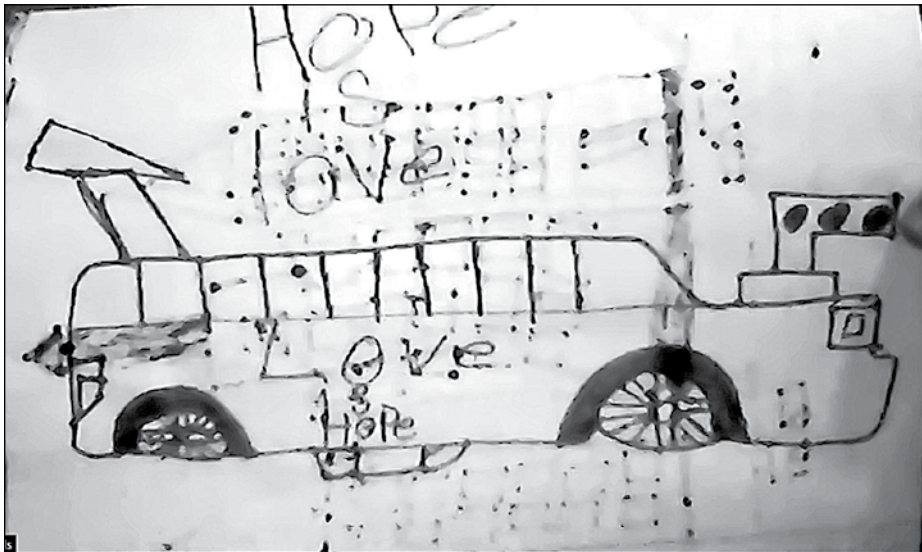
Pixel art by Jeremiah Cunningham.



Pixel art by Xavier Rios.

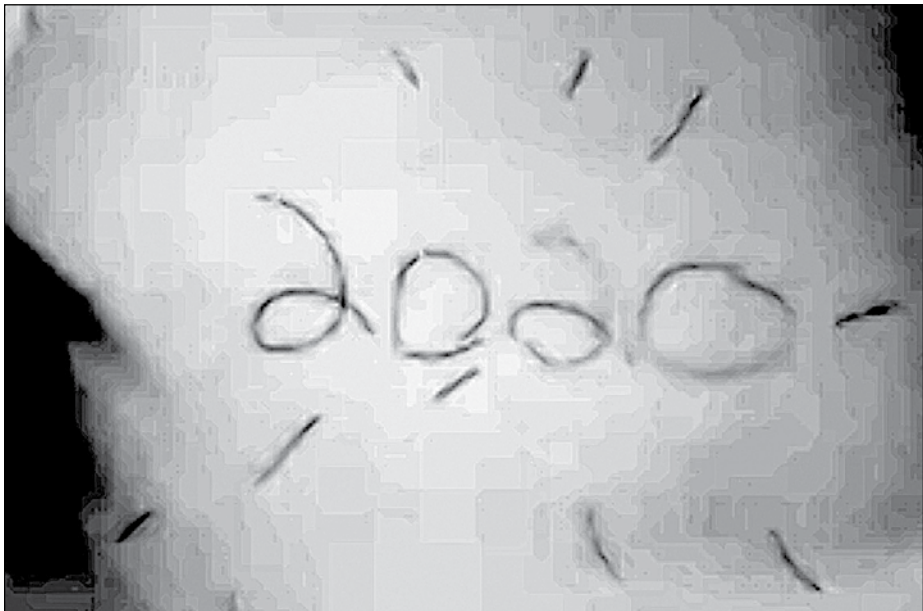


Pixel art by Yeriel Velazquez Rodriguez.



A drawing by Ajay Daniels. Amy Jewitt submitted photos of her middle schools students' art. The class, held by Zoom, included pixel art and drawings. All of the students submission were by fifth graders at Veritas Prep in Holyoke.

Submitted photos



A drawing by Ja'ziah Diaz.

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